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Book by Philby Says He Foiled Detection in 1945

By HENRY RAYMONT

The forthcoming memoirs of the spy Harold A. R. (Kim) Philby assert that a Soviet intelligence officer in Istanbul who was preparing to defect to the West tried to alert the British Government in 1945 to the existence of three Soviet undercover agents in its intelligence service.

But Mr. Philby writes that he was instrumental in preventing more specific information from reaching London. The agents were Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess and Mr. Philby himself —all high British secret service officials. Mr. Maclean and Mr. Burgess defected to the Soviet Union in 1951, and Mr. Philby defected in 1963.

In an 85-000-word manuscript he completed last summer in Moscow, Mr. Philby writes that the Soviet official's defection was foiled, presumably after Mr. Philby notified the Soviet authorities.

Mr. Philby contends that he and his two associates were not detected mainly because of the British Government's reluctance to investigate anyone with their upper-class and university background.

First Part Published

The first installment of Mr. Philby's account of his 30 years as a double agent is being published for the first time in the West in the current issue of Evergreen Review, a monthly magazine of literature and politics published in New York. A second installment is to appear in the magazine's May issue and the memoirs will be published by Wave Press next month as a book titled "My Silent War."

In the manuscript of the book, a copy of which became available to The New York Times, Mr. Philby traces his career in the British intelligence service, from 1940 until he became First Secretary of the British Embassy in Washington in 1949, in charge of liaison with the United States Government in security matters.

The main themes are laxity and rivalries in the British and American intelligence agencies, the failure of alleged plans to foment anti-Communist sentiment in Eastern Europe and the cold, convoluted thinking required in the improbable world of espionage.

Camera Press-Pix

Harold A. R. Philby

Mr. Philby, believed to be the most important Soviet agent to have penetrated Western intelligence, has lived in Moscow since he fled to the Soviet Union from Beirut, Lebanon, where he was Middle Eastern correspondent of The Observer of London. Last December, he was acclaimed a hero of the K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence service, in connection with the 50th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Two-Fold Purpose Seen

The sudden attention given Mr. Philby and Moscow's authorization of the publication of his memoirs in the West were viewed by experts in Soviet policies as serving a two-fold purpose to discredit Western intelligence organizations and to improve the image of the Soviet Union's security services for its citizens.

The manuscript is written as "a personal record" of what Mr. Philby calls "the hazards of the long journey from Cambridge to Moscow." Mr. Philby asserts that he became a Soviet agent in 1933 out of Communist conviction gained at Cambridge and that he was recruited into the British secret service by Mr. Burgess in 1940. But he offers no details how he first met Mr. Burgess and Mr. Maclean at the university, nor does he identify any of his Soviet contacts.

"During my period of service there was no single case of a consciously conceived operation against Soviet intelligence bearing fruit," he writes.

The tip to the British Government that could have led to the exposure of his spy ring, he says, came from a Soviet intelligence agent identified as Konstantin Volkov.

Assigned to Case

Mr. Philby says he prevented more specific information from reaching London by getting himself assigned to the case "because it nearly put an end to a promising career." By the time he arrived in Istanbul, three weeks after Mr. Volkov first made contact with the British, inquiries at the Soviet Embassy were greeted with a terse "Volkov's in Moscow."

In a report to his superiors, Mr. Philby writes, he speculated that the Russians could have learned of Mr. Volkov's intentions to defect by bugging his room. Or Mr. Volkov might have betrayed himself through nervousness or excessive drinking, Mr. Philby added.

"Another theory—that the Russians had been tipped off about Volkov's approach to the British—had no solid evidence to support it," Mr. Philby writes. "It was not worth including in my report."

Another crisis that jeopardized his career came during Mr. Philby's service in Washington. Shortly after his arrival in 1949, he was informed that a British-American investigation of Soviet intelligence activity had yielded "a strong suggestion" that information had leaked from the British Embassy during 1944 and 1945, the years Mr. Maclean had been there.

Mr. Philby writes that his initial anxiety "was tempered by relief" after he found that neither the British nor the Federal Bureau of Investigation suspected that a high diplomat was involved.

"Instead," he adds, "the investigation had conecentrated on nondiplomatic employes at the embassy, and particularly on those locally recruited, the sweepers, cleaners, bottle washers and the rest. A charlady with a Latvian grandmother, for instance, would rate a 15-page report crowded with insignificant detail of herself, her family and friends, her private life and holiday habits. It was testimony to the enormous resources of the F.B.I. and to the pitiful extent to wihch those resources were squandered. It was enough to convince me that urgent action would not be necessary, but that the case would require minute watching."

However, during later meetings with Soviet contacts outside [illegible] that "it was essential to rescue Maclean before the net closed on him." Mr. Maclean was at the time head of the American Department of the Foreign Office in London.

Mr. Philby tells how he assigned Mr. Burgess, who was also working at the British Embassy and living with the Philbys, to warn Mr. Maclean in London. Mr. Burgess was to get himself arrested three times in one day for drunken driving in Virginia, forcing Sir Oliver Franks, the British Ambassador, to send him home because "it might have looked a bit odd" had Mr. Burgess returned voluntarily just before Mr. Maclean disappeared.

Confident that Mr. Maclean would soon be safe, Mr. Philby forestalled any possibility that he would be suspected by giving the investigation "a nudge in the right direction." To that end, he writes, "I wrote a memorandum to Head Office suggesting that we might be wasting our time in exhaustive investigations of the embassy menials."

But after reaching London, Mr. Burgess apparently panicked and joined Mr. Maclean in his flight to the Soviet Union, on May 25, 1951.

Describing how he learned about their escape from a colleague at the embassy "at a horribly early hour" the next morning, Mr. Philby writes:

"He looked grey. 'Kim,' he said in a half-whisper, 'the bird has flown.' I registered dawning horror (I hope). 'What bird? Not Maclean?' 'Yes,' he answered, 'but there's worse than that. Guy Burgess has gone with him.' At that, my consternation was no pretense."

In the wake of the Burgess-Maclean case, which caused a major outcry in Parliament, Mr. Philby was recalled from Washington and was asked to resign. The Government denied at the time that he had been involved in the case and, according to the memoirs, five years later he resumed his role as a double agent while working for The Observer.

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Philby, Harold, Kim
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